Sale of Sura

613. SHRI J. P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided that Mrit Sanjivini Sura shall be available only on a doctor's prescription;

(b) whether it is a fact that the Mrit Sanjivini Sura contains 25 to 40 per cent alcoholic content and is manufactured clandestinely;

(c) if so, the reasons for which it is being allowed to be sold on a doctor's prescription; and

(d) whether any measures are contemplated to stop the manufacture of sura with more than a permitted percentage of alcohol and impose a ban on their sale, and if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (KUMARI SAROJ KHAPARDE): (a) to (d) In accordance with the Drugs and Cosmetics Act or the Rules made thereunder, no prescription is required for sale of Mrit Sanjivini Sura. The Government are aware about the misuse of Mrit Sanjivini Sura alcoholic drink. According to classics on Ayurveda, Mrit Sanjivini Sura is prepared by a distillation process after fermenting jaggery in decoction of Babul (Acacia arabica) and 43 other drugs. The recommended dosage for treatment is 20 to 60 drops. The Ayurvedic, Sidhha and Unani Drugs Technical Advisory Board as well as the Ayurvedic, Siddha and Unani Drugs Consultative Committee have considered measures to prevent the misuse of this drug on the basis of their recommendations the State Governments have been requested to take necessary punitive action under the existing laws including the Excise Acts. It has also been recommended that the Sura should have only its natural colour. Special attention is being paid to evolve pharmacopoeial standards for Mrit Sanjivini Sura by the Ayurvedic Pharmacopoeia Committee. The Pharmacopoeial Laboratory for Indian Medicine, Ghaziabad, which tested 22 market samples found alcoholic content ranging from 18 per cent to 37 per cent in these samples.

Invigilation duty in Delhi Board Senior Secondary Examination 1987

614. SHRI J. P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that clerks, laboratory attendants and even workers on daily wages were engaged on the invigilation duty in the Delhi Board Senior Secondary Examinatons in March, 1987;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard;

(c) the number of persons employed on daily wages for the invigilation duty and what qualifications were prescribed for them; and

(d) the extent to which these persons performed their duties to the satisfaction of all concerned?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI KRISHNA SAHI): (a) to (d) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Proportion between Post Offices and population

615. SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the ideal proportion between the number of post offices and the population;

(b) whether there is some change, recently in the said proportion; and

(c) if so, details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) There is no 'ideal ratio' as such between the number of post offices and the population. However, the target adopted for the second U.N. development decade was one post office to serve 3000 to 6000 people on an average. As against this target, in India the average population served by a post office is 4745. As a matter of fact, post offices are sanctioned based on a variety of criteria which include not only the population factor but also the distance from the nearest existing post office, the assessment of postal traffic in the area and the likely cost to be incurred as well as the revenue expected to be earned.

(b) and (c) The change effected recently relates to the population norms to be followed in rural areas. Under the earlier norms, *inter alia*, a minimum population of 2000 was prescribed for opening a post office. In backward and tribal areas the required population of a village together with its hamlets was fixed as 1000. In the revised norms, a post office will be planned for a group of villages, the combined population of which should be 5000 in normal rural areas and 2500 in hilly, backward and tribal areas. Within this group, a suitable village will be selected for locating the post office.

Expansion of Postal and Telecommunication facilities

616. SHRI KALPNATH RAI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of programmes drawn up for the expansion of postal and telecommunication facilities in the rural areas during the Seventh Plan; and

(b) the progress made so far in this

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) and (b) Postal: Through the successive Five-Year Plans, the Department has already built up a comprehensive rural postal network. At present there are 1,28,370 post offices functioning in rural areas. During the first two years of the Seventh Plan, namely 1985-86 and 1986-87, there was no programme of rural postal extension on account of the ban on creation of posts. The Ministry of Finance have since indicated special procedures for creation/filling up of posts required for implementation of Plan schemes. In pursuance thereof, the Deptt. has worked out norms and circles have been asked to carry out a fresh assessment in accordance with the norms. The proposals for post offices which satisfy the norms may be taken up with the Ministry of Finance for consideration.

Telecommunications: (a) 9,000 Long Distance Public Telephones are planned to be provided in the rural areas during the Seventh Plan.

(b) 3,067 Long Distance Public Telephones have been opened during the first two years of the seventh Plan.

Import of foreign technology for Railways

617. SHRI MOSTAFA BIN QUASEM: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that import of foreign techology is more beneficial for Indian Railways in developing high horse power electric locomotives, and

(b) if so, what are the shortcoming in indigenous technology and local manufacturing units?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) Yes, Sir.